

Remarks:

This amendment is submitted in an earnest effort to advance this case to issue without delay.

Claim 1 has been amended to defined the invention with somewhat greater particularity over the art. The other claims have been amended to sharpen their language and overcome the §112 problems.

Claim 1 now makes it clear that we are here dealing with flexible metal strip as recited in numerous locations in the original Specification. In practice the strip of this invention is less than 5 mm in thickness, normally between 1.2 mm and 1.6 mm. Such hot-rolled strip is typically used in motor-vehicle bodies of so-called unibody construction where the actual shell of the vehicle carries and transmits load, that is where the sheet-metal body largely replaces the old-style construction having a rigid frame carrying the body.

In the two applied references, US 4,248,072 of Hasegawa and 3,339,908 of Komarnitsky much thicker metal is being worked to make massive load-bearing leaf springs. In Hasegawa the thickness is some 20.5 mm, more than ten times thicker than that of the instant invention and not "flexible" by any standard. Hasegawa and Komarnitsky are clearly dealing with bar stock that represents a

different problem and is used to make a different product than the flexible strip of this invention.

With the instant invention the "flexible" strip is subsequently treated to make it substantially inflexible at some locations. This is particularly necessary for a B-column of a motor vehicle which is supposed to have a very strong and essentially inflexible base, but a more flexible top portion so that, in an accident, the part will deform in a manner protective of the vehicle occupants.

The massive leaf springs of both of the cited references are not "flexible" within the standard meaning of the term. A steel bar 20 mm thick can only be deformed if subjected to a very large stress, so that if it is considered flexible, anything is flexible.

For these reasons the cited references do not anticipate the amended claims under §103. Notice to that effect is earnestly solicited.

If only minor problems that could be corrected by means of a telephone conference stand in the way of allowance of this

case, the examiner is invited to call the undersigned to make the necessary corrections.

Respectfully submitted,  
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Enclosure: None.